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ABSTRACT

This article examines the nature of course outlines and the means of attaining a more explicit and comprehensive elaboration of course objectives. A course outline format is suggested, listing 11 items of information. Two German courses are outlined in detail in five major areas. They include: (1) phonology, (2) morphology, (3) syntax, (4) vocabulary, and (5) culture. (RL)

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THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES APPROACH TO WRITING COURSE OUTLINES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

by

John Michalski

At Leeward Community College every instructor is required to plan his course by means of a course outline. The purpose of this course outline is to answer at least three elemental questions about any course being taught:

1) What will the student have learned specifically by the end of the course that he did not know before?

2) By what means are we going to assess the skills or knowledge acquired by the student?

3) What are the most efficient procedures and materials to get the skills or knowledge of a course across to the student?

The minimum course outline format contains the following items of information, which should be of maximum benefit to the student, the professional colleague, the administrator or anyone else interested:

1) Instructor's name, office location and office hours (staggered), office phone.

2) Course title, number, section numbers.

3) Course description.

4) Credit hours, prerequisites.

5) Course goals and objectives.

Definition:

Goal: A broad, generalized statement toward which an education sequence aims.

Objective: The expected learning the student is to acquire. It should specify a clear task, the conditions under which the task shall be performed, and a minimum criterion level.

Objectives should state the observable manner in which the student shall conduct himself at the end

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of the learning sequence which would be different from the observable manner in which the student presently conducts himself.

6) Course organization, unit goals, contents.

7) Texts and other materials used (give full bibliographical information).

8) Reference materials (where applicable; give college library call numbers).

9) Bases for grading: A, B, C, D, Q, W (F) (the standard must be that of a recognized college or university and must be defined in detail).

10) Student responsibilities (e.g., attendance, required class participation, etc.).

11) Statement about how make-up work and tests will be handled.

If carefully prepared, this course outline will answer most questions about a course given at Leeward Community College. It is the division chairman's duty to ascertain that there is no gap between the stated goals and objectives and an instructor's classroom performance. In addition to the division chairman, an instructor is also evaluated by his students, his peers and by himself.

For those who have never planned a course through a detailed course outline containing goals and objectives, let me be a bit more specific.

The major goal of a course could be contained in the college catalogue course description. For German 101-102 (Elementary German) it goes something like this:

"Basic structures of the German language emphasizing speaking, writing and comprehension in listening and reading. These German language structures are practiced in class and in the language laboratory until students can use them without hesitation in written and conversational exchanges."

The objectives of the course could include the following statement of procedures:

"The major objective in this course is competency in speaking, understanding the spoken word, writing and reading the German language within the scope and content of Moderne Deutsche Sprachlehre. These objectives represent primarily skills rather than intellectual achievements. In order to succeed in achieving these skills the student

will have to attend class regularly and spend at least two hours of outside study for each hour of classroom work.

German, as any other language, is a set of habits. We have all learned to speak our native tongue by listening, imitation and repetition. If a language is used correctly, it is because one is in the habit of doing so. How does one acquire this important habit?

The student must listen to the instructor and imitate him as closely as possible. He must memorize and synthesize the material he is trying to learn and then repeat it over and over. The material must become part of the student and be used without hesitation or thinking about the process.

Language learning is highly cumulative. Constant attendance and preparation is a must. Make-up work in this course is extremely difficult. Cramming at the last minute is a hopeless endeavor in language learning.

The language laboratory is not a substitute for the instructor, it is simply a drill master for language material which the student has first encountered in class and learned to pronounce correctly by imitating the instructor. The language laboratory provides additional practice in speaking, the skill that can almost never be drilled sufficiently in class due to limitations of class size and contact hours."

The content section, which is usually based on a selected textbook, should state what skills the student is expected to learn in terms of the following linguistic categories:

A. Phonology
B. Morphology
C. Syntax
D. Vocabulary
E. Culture

For German 101-102, the content looks as follows:

German 101 Content

Duval, F. A., L. M. Duval, K. A. Mueller, and H. F. Wiese: Moderne Deutsche Sprachlehre, New York, Random House, 1968 (including the workbook, Arbeitsheft) Lektion A through Lektion 13.

A. Phonology: Listening and speaking skills

1. long a
2. short a
3. long e
4. short e
5. slurred e
6. long ä
7. short ä
8. long i
9. short i
10. long o
11. short o
12. long u
13. short u
14. diphtong ei
15. diphtong au
16. diphtong eu, äu
17. long ö
18. short ö
19. long ü
20. short ü
21. b, p, d, t, g, k, s like English z, s
22. front ch
23. back ch
24. l, r, ng
25. sch
26. st (two varieties)
27. sp
28. f
29. w
30. ts
31. tsw
32. spr
33. tst
34. schl
35. schr
36. pf
37. str
38. schw
39. chts
40. spelling exercises

B. Morphology: Listening and speaking skills, as well as reading and writing skills

1. personal pronouns
2. present tense of regular and irregular verbs
3. uses of the polite form
4. uses of nicht and kein
5. definite and indefinite articles
6. plurals of nouns
7. present perfect tense
8. the modals, können, müssen, mögen, (möchten), wollen, dürfen, sollen and the verb wissen
9. preposition with the dative and the accusative
10. separable prefixes
11. direct and indirect object
12. command forms
13. numbers
14. prepositions with the dative
15. past tense of strong and weak verbs
16. past perfect tense.

C. Syntax: Listening and speaking skills, as well as reading and writing skills

1. normal and inverted word order
2. word order in commands and questions
3. word order with modals
4. position of nicht

D. Vocabulary: Content areas

1. study at home and in school
2. greetings and leave-taking
3. activities in the living room
4. material for a report
5. activities in a restaurant
6. the environs of Munich
7. the seasons, months, days of the week, other time elements
8. activities at a railroad station
9. the German National Museum in Munich
10. the city of Salzburg
11. an American in Germany
12. an evening out dancing
13. the youth in Germany
14. making a new acquaintance
15. the German school system
16. poetry by Joseph Weinheber
17. activities in a confectioner's shop
18. the refugee problem in Germany
19. the German Federal Republic
20. poetry by Wolfgang Weyrauch and Peter Lehner

E. Culture: Aspects of German-Austrian-Swiss culture and life are introduced as an integral part of teaching the German language. The student learns to detect nuances of meaning relating to social position, family relationships, customs, and national traditions. He also learns to use culturally acceptable forms appropriate to the age, social standing, and occupation of the person addressed.

German 102 Content

Moderne Deutsche Sprachlehre, Lektion 14 through Lektion 25

A. Phonology: Listening and speaking skills. Added drill and repetition of the vowels, consonants, and diphthongs taken up in German 101. Progressively more complex speaking exercises.

B. Morphology: Listening and speaking skills, as well as reading and writing skills

1. genetive case
2. uses of dieser, jeder, jener, mancher, solcher, and welcher

3. declension of adjectives
4. past tense of modal auxiliaries and wissen
5. prepositions with the genetive case
6. genetive of personal names
7. der-words
8. intransitive verbs plus sein
9. relative pronouns
10. subordinating conjunctions
11. adjectives after etwas and nichts
12. future tense
13. double infinitive
14. prepositions with the accusative
15. da- and wo- compounds
16. forms of address
17. the indicative mood, the subjunctive mood, the conditional, and the indirect discourse
18. forms of the passive

C. Syntax: Listening and speaking skills, as well as reading and writing skills

1. word order in the present perfect and future tenses
2. word order with separable prefixes
3. position of direct and indirect objects
4. word order in clauses with subordinating and coordinating conjunctions
5. participial conjunctions

D. Vocabulary: Content areas

1. at a bus stop
2. German as a foreign language
3. television and advertising
4. at the doctor's
5. elements of German medicine
6. the human body
7. a popular festival
8. a German Turnfest
9. Bert Brecht's song Mackie, the Knife
10. in the city of Berlin
11. Shakespeare in German
12. student life at a German university
13. academic freedom
14. exchange of letters
15. selections from German poetry
16. the Free University of Berlin

E. Culture: Continuation of the introduction of aspects of German-Austrian-Swiss culture and life as an integral part of the teaching of the German language. Visual and audio stimuli will be used to acquaint the student with habits and behaviour typical to the German speaking countries.

Why is this goals and objectives approach superior to other forms of course planning? It is superior because

1. it requires the instructor to carefully plan out his course, stating in detail what the student is expected to have learned, what teaching and testing procedures have been used, and what teaching aids were employed.

2. the instructor teaching the course can evaluate at the end of each semester what portions of his course have worked well and which have not. He can thus continually revise and improve his teaching materials and procedures as he goes along. (It is taken for granted that an instructor can deviate from his course outline, particularly if he is instituting a method or materials superior to those stated in the course outline.)

3. the instructor himself, his students, peers, and administrators can evaluate the classroom performance and effectiveness against the stated goals and objectives of a course outline.

It is imperative to keep an open mind throughout. The major goal for this entire approach is to improve teaching by making it more interesting, relevant and effective. There is usually more than one way of accomplishing this, depending on the instructors' background, experience, personality, and general disposition.

If you wish to see a sample copy of a course outline at Leeward Community College, write directly to a specific instructor, enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope (for those at University of Hawaii, use "campus mail") and we will be happy to oblige. Any comments or criticisms you wish to make are, of course, always welcome.

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